THE HOUSE OF ILL-LUCK,

BY BLANCHE EARDLEY.

Rosemary obeyed at once, and was subjected to a long, critical scrutiny that made the color flame

"Humph!-pretty-yes-quite pretbut don't pride yourself on

that. Beauty is only skin-deep, and handsome is as handsome does. I

hope you will remember that."
"I-I will try to," Rosemary

murmured, and as she thought of her borrowed name and the de-

ception she was already practicing

the color again flooded her pale cheeks. Her first impulse, to con-fess everything to Lady Mallaby

and throw herself on her mercy,

could imagine the white heat of wrath and biting contempt that would flash from the strange

old eyes. No! She had burnt her boats,

and could only go straight on.
"What is your name-your
Christian name?" Lady Mallaby

mary could say anything in an

seemed now to be madness.

in her cheeks.

said abruptly.

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The Mysterious Marriage and the Accident That Changed Things.

CHAPTER I. THE MAN IN THE FOG.



HE electric light flashed like a brilliant white sun upon everything in waiting room of the La-dies' Employment Bureau, King street, Covent Garden. Outside, the day had been dismal and murky, and now, at 4 fn the afternoon, a dark threatening fog enveloped the houses opposite in a dense shroud of ever-increasing blackness.

Inside the waiting room a fire flickered fitfully, throwing out a tiny shaft of warmth to the solitary figure that sat walting with the patience that only a hope long deferred can make a fine art. The glare of the electric light fell full upon the slight figure in the chair, accentuating the pallor of the ivory cheeks, the faint hollows in the places where dimples should have been, and the weary droop of the red

lips. It threw up the thread of gold in the brown hair and lent a strange beatuy to the steadfast violet eyes that burned so hungrily in the tired face. The opening of the office door roused the girl from her reverie, and she glanced up calckly with a gleam of relief in her eyes, that faded as she saw who it was that closed the door behind him with a firm "click" of

He was a tall, dark man, with a lean, clean-shaven face, and a pair of hawklike eyes that rested for a moment upon the pure, delicate beauty of the girl in the chair, taking in, in that one swift scrutiny, the refinement, the poverty, and the nobleness stamped upon her beauty like a blot upon a fair landscape. Then, with a

slight bow, he crossed the room, and, opening the outer door, passed into the embrace of the fog. But as soon as he reached the street he paused and glanced back at the shut door with a thoughtful frown

"I've wasted half an hour in that office trying to get the old cat who runs the show to find me the girl I want for the job, and all the time she was 'suggesting' and 'regretting,' the very girl was there, waiting to see her." A soft exclamation fluttered to his lips. "Yes, the very girl! A lady from head to foot. Poor, young, and earning, or trying to earn, her own living. Why, 1 might almost believe that I was sent by a special provi-dence to see the ogre-faced manageress of the Ladies' Employment Bureau!" He laughed grimly, and turned up the collar of his coat. "At any rate, I shall wait here and see what happens. I should say she won't be long, judging from the old woman's impatience with me."

Lighting a cigarette, he drew his cap down over his ves and leaned against the wall, a lazy smile in his

dark eyes.

In the meantime, the girl in the waiting room had started to her feet and knocked timidly at the office door. A toneless voice bade her enter, and, as she did so, an elderly, sour-visaged woman, with a "shining" high forehead and a dull, parched-looking skin, said

Well, Miss Fenchester, what do you think you can find to do in this weather? I told you I would write to you if anything turned up."

The girl's eyes shone with tears. "Then you have nothing for me, Miss Smith? I could not stay in my room night have turned up," she said in a low, tired voice. You don't know how awful suspense is when you have no one to bear it with you." The manageress' soured face relaxed from its usual

expression. Perhaps she, too, could remember what it had been to endure suspense alone.

"I can quite understand your impatience," she said, more kindly; "but, on a day like this, it is waste of time to come down here. There is absolutely nothing doing; not a soul has been near the place except yourself and a gentleman who has just gone. You must have seen

'Yes." Then she added slowly, "When can you hold

Miss Smith peered through the fog that had penetrated into the dingy little office, and caught the expression hopelessness on the white face, and a sudden light shot into her dull gray eyes.

"That gentleman who went out just now had come to see whether I had some one on my books who could do secretarial work, but—"

The girl uttered an exclamation of despair. "Oh, why didn't you suggest me? To think that a good chance

may not have been a good chance," Miss Smith remarked dryly. "There were too many qualifications required; perhaps you're just as well out of it. You'd

better come down again next week; I can hold out no lope of anything till then." 'Next week!" the girl said with a dreary laugh. "You tell me to wait till then, but I don't see how I can. I have been hoping so long that something would turn up."

"I'm very sorry, Miss Fenchester," was the mana-geress' reply, "but you can hardly expect me to make an exception in your case. I will let you know when any one is likely to require a typist, and really I can A few moments later the girl opened the door through

A few moments later the girl opened the door through which the stranger had passed and stepped out into the fog, which now was so thick as to be almost like a black wall of vapor. As she realized that she had to walk home through it, she uttered an exclamation of dismay. She had been just long enough in London searching for work to dread the first bad fog, and now she was already dazed as to which turning she should take to reach Kepple street, where she had a back bed-sitting room. For three months she had occupied that dull, poorly furnished room, hoping with the advent of each day that it would be her last there. With £50 in her pockets, and full of hope and courage, she had come up to London from the country village of which her father had been the vicar, and where, on his death, she had no further need to live. And then had begun the long, weary search for work. But week after week had gone by, and soon the truth was borne in upon her that she was barred from making even the smallest living at the humblest occupation. She had tried everything in turn, from a nursery governess and mother's help to a typist, and even housekeeper in a dame's school, but each application had fallen through, some on the score of inexperience, others on that of personal appearance.

And now, with exactly £5 between herself and starva-

appearance,
And now, with exactly £5 between herself and starvaand now, with exactly 25 between nersell and starva-tion, she stood outside the door of the Ladies' Employ-ment Bureau in a half-dazed condition, wondering how she could venture to move from the step of the only place she knew in London, with the exception of Keppie

Suddenly, as she hesitated, a hand shot out of the darkness and touched her arm, while at the same time a cultured voice said apologetically: "I hep pardon, but is this anywhere near the office of the Ladies' Employment Bureau? I've missed my bearings."

A tremor of surprise seized her. "Yes, this is it." she replied softly. "I have just left it, but I'm afraid they are closed now," she added, her eyes vainly trying to pierce the veil that enveloped her questioner. But apart from the fact that it was a man whose figure seemed to loom gigantically tall in the fog, she could see nothing else. As she made a movement to pass him the stranger spoke again.

else. As she made a movement to pass him the stranger spoke again.

"Closed! What a misfortune! I had just left the office a few moments ago, before the fog became so thick, and the manageress had told me that she could not find me the kind of secretary I wanted, so I was coming back to tell her not to trouble to look out for any one else, as I was going to advertise."

"Then you are the gentleman who left the office when I was waiting to see Miss Smith," the girl exclaimed. "She told me that you had wanted a secretary, and regretted that she had not known that I was waiting, or she would have introduced me to you. Won't you—I mean—is it too late for me to try for the post?" she stammered, suddenly aware that she was talking to, an absolute stranger, whose face she could not even see. Had the fog lifted at that moment she would have noticed a sudden strange gleam flash into the man's dark eyes—a flash of triumph and satisfaction, as though he had obtained something for which he had worked. But his voice revealed nothing of triumph as he repiled slowly:

"I shall certainly he happy to give you a trial, only I

"I shall certainly be happy to give you a trial, only I should like to hear some particulars about you first, as the work I have waiting to be done requires courage and pluck." Then before she could reply he went on quickly: "I think, if you don't mind, that we had better try to make our way to a teashop, where I shall be very glad to listen to any particulars that you will tell me."

A few minutes later their careful walking brought them into the Strand, where the fog seemed a little clearer, and misty figures with fog-grimed faces came and went like shadows moving in a dream. As the girl and her prospective employer sat down at a marble-



topped table in one of the popular teahouses near Charling Cross she stole a timid glance at his dark, sinister face, and for a moment a sudden wave of repulsion swept over her, making her regret that she had agreed to tell him the details he had wished to learn. But the memory of the last £5, and the uncompromising attitude of Miss Smith reminded her that she dared not afford to criticise her possible salvation from starvation.

As the man listened to her brief story his face lit up with relief. It was almost more favorable than he had hoped. An orphan, with no living relatives to interfere, young, a lady, and not only beautiful but sufficiently poor to make his proposal come almost in the nature of a godsend. When she had finished he looked at her thoughtfully.

"And your name is Rosemary Fenchester," he said wly. "It is a pretty name; almost too pretty for a y typist."

slowly. "It is a pretty name; almost too pretty for a lady typist."

A slight flush stained the girl's pale cheeks, and she drew herself up with a dignity that was not lost upon the cool, watchful eyes that rested on her face.

"Let me explain," he went on quickly. "When I went to the employment bureau it was not really for a lady typist I was looking, but for some one who could not only keep a secret, but share the burden of one; and the person I sought must be young, beautiful, and poor before she could help me."

Rosemary looked at him in bewilderment.

"And now," he went on in a lower tone, "the service I want you to do, Miss Fenchester, is one that will not take you more than a few minutes, and for which you will be more than handsomely paid."

"What is it?" she asked wonderingly.

"To go through a form of marriage with a dying man," he replied, his dark eyes noting the sudden shrinking in her manner. "It is only a form by which some property is kept in a family, and if the marriage does not take place before midnight those who are most dependent

place before midnight those who are most dependent upon this dying man will be left penniless. For your share you would receive the sum of £2,000 down and £400 to year for life."

I don't understand," she faltered; "It is all so strange and mysterious. Besides, I cannot do such a thing

"How 'impossible." You have nothing to lose, all to gain. No one will ever know, except that you are the widow of a man who died on your wedding day. And then, he added, "you would never be obliged to earn your own living. You could go where you liked, travel, and see something of other countries, all for so little."

"I cannot do it," she said again. "I would rather lose the money than win luxury at such a cost."

For a moment it seemed that the man facing her was going to drop the mask of courtesy he had been wearing

going to drop the mask of courtesy he had been wearing during the interview, but after a brief pause he said

I sympathize with you in a sense; but think of the other side of the question. Here is this man, who is deing, and if he dies unmarried the property he would inherit passes from him, and not only that, but his mother would also lose the home that has been hers for years. The will under which she has enjoyed her present position has stipulated that it ceases if her son dies unmarried, causing the property to go to another branch of the family."

family."

He paused and glanced at the girl's white face.
"Don't you think that in the circumstances you can do an act that, after all, will do no harm, but good, to all parties concerned?"

The girl clasped her hands and glanced at the door that was constantly opening to admit wayfayers out of the fog. Beyond the door there lay a prospect of even worse despair and humiliation than she had already experienced, and here inside the room was the darries of the control o

despair and humiliation than she had already experienced, and here, inside the room, was the dazzling chance of escape and future comparative affluence.

"Come," he went on impatiently; "need we waste time, Miss Fenchester? You will never regret the step I am asking you to take. I will give you ten minutes in which to make up your mind. If you refuse—which I hope you won't do—then I must hurry out to look for some one else, but if you agree we will drive to the house where the dying man is waiting for the woman who can help him to keep his money from going to a worthless cousin."

Three minutes later he was halling a hansom. The fog had now almost lifted, and under the yellow glare of the street lamp the face of the girl by his side gleamed

CHAPTER II.

Rosemary Fenchester stood alone in a large, gloomily furnished room. It was two hours since she had gone through that dreamlike marriage by the bedside of a man whose face she had not been able to distinguish, so gloomy had been the light of the two stately candles on the mantel. The clergyman by the bed had mumbled the marriage service, and the man who lay there had whispered the responses with herself, and then it had come to an end. Her escort had hurried her out of the room after she had signed a paper which had been thrust before her, and she had been shown into this empty room to wait for the check that was to open the door of ease and liberty to her.

A sudden sound of voices in the next room snapped the thread of her thoughts.

"That was the neatest job we've ever arranged," said one voice-that of the man who had, in a sense, been her "guide," "I thought at first that we should never work it, but I threw so much feeling into my voice when I described the terrible pathos of your approaching death that I very soon talked over her scruples."

There was a low, callous laugh, and the blood of the listening girl ran cold with a sudden, awful fear as she waited impatiently for the speech that was bound to ollow the laugh,

When it came her face blanched to a deathly white, or it was the same voice, only stronger, of the man he had made the responses in the marriage ceremony

who had made the responses in the marriage ceremony she had just gone through.

"The whole thing is a credit to your astute and fertile brain, my dear boy. I was only afraid lest I should be unable to keep up my role of dying man. Luckily, everything was in my favor, and I fancy I played my part well. And now you have only to pay my 'bride' her share of the plunder and get rid of her."

There was another laugh, this time from the man who had played the part of Judas in the affair.

"It will be easy to get rid of her. She knows nothing—not even your name nor mine—and is only too anxious to

not even your name nor mine—and is only too anxious to escape from my clutches; but, by Jove, if you had seen how lovely she is, you would not want to get rid of her

"It's just as well I don't see her, then," was the swift reply. "Ive no fancy to run myself into danger by philandering after a lovely face, though I may be legally bound to the owner. The marriage certilcate is all I want. You had better go and get her out of the house—there is a lot before us yet."

As the voice died away the girl drew a long breath, a sobbing, half-ashamed note of horror. That idle conversation had revealed to her the depth of the heartless trap into which she had been lured. She had married a man who had played the part of a dying man. Everything his accomplice had told her about his love for his "mother" was all a fraud—part of the hideous plan to win her sympathy. What were these men and into what win her sympathy. What were these men and into what loathsome contract had she entered? she wondered wildly,

Then another thought flashed across her brain, sending a flush of shame to her face. The money they meant to give her was now "blood money." She was probably robbing some one else in taking it. At least, she could refuse to be made in the could refuse to be made.

All was silent now, and she wondered what plot the two men were concecting. She stepped into the passage with a soft tread, and, seeing the way clear, made a sudden rush down the stairs.

next moment Rosemary caught a blurred impression

ner:
"You'd better take a cab home, miss. I wouldn't walk
if I were you." And then he added, "This is your letter,
I think. The policeman brought it in with your bag,
which you dropped."

think. The ponceman brought it in with your bag, which you dropped."

She took the letter silently and slipped it into her bag. She knew she had had one or two letters in it, and one must have fallen out when she dropped the bag.

When she reached Kepple street and was once more in her lonely little bed-sitting room, she emptied her bag of its few contents, and, as she looked more closely at it, she caught her breath with astonishment. Instead of the black silk one that had held her purse and hand-kerchlef, the bag in her possession was of black satin, and one quick glance at its contents told her that it was not her own. In the hurry and confusion, when she had fainted, the policeman must have picked up another one. And then, in a flash, she guessed that it must have been dropped by the woman who had stood by her side for a moment before she was run over. She had evidently dropped her own bag at the same time, and very likely they had been exchanged.

headed: "Luck House, Barton Telford, Cornwall," and it began abruptly:

Lady Maliaby has considered Miss Ffrench's application for the vacant companionship, and, after due consideration, has decided to accept Miss Ffrench's services on a month's trial on either side. Lady Maliaby will expect Miss Ffrench on Friday, November 19. A convenient train leaves Paddington for Barton Telford—changing at Frampton—at 2:40, arriving at 6:50. The trap will be waiting to bring Miss Ffrench to Luck House.

As she read the few curt, businesslike lines, Rosemary's eyes filled with sudden tears. This letter had probably brought happiness to the girl who was now perhaps lying dead in a London hospital. An odd sensation began to grip her that fate had played a part in the strange accident that had culminated in the disappearance of her own bag and the finding of that of the injured girl, whose surname began with the same initial as her own.

a small purse. The body is now waiting for identification.

As the girl put down the paper a tap at the door heralded the entrance of her landlady.

"Excuse me, miss," she began, "but I was wondering whether you could let me have a little bit on account. I don't like to press you, but I've been 'aving bad luck lately with the letting."

"I can give you £1, Mrs. Cragge. I think I shall be going away soon to a place in the country, and will settle up everything before I go."

Two days later Rosemary left Paddington station for Barton Telford, her simple portmanteau with the simple letter "F." and a handbag similarly marked, being her only luggage. In six hours' time the train arrived at Barton Telford, a lonely little station round which the Cornish wind blew from the sea in chilly gusts.

As the solitary passenger stepped out of the third-

standing beside her luggage.

refuse to be made a partner in a robbery by escaping from the house before the man who had lured her into it with lies could enter the room.

She moved swiftly to the door and listened intently.

As she crossed the big, massive door a sound above

her on the landing made her pause and glance up in a sudden panic. Looking over the banisters was a woman with an evil, beautiful face, framed in a cloud of dusky

trinket in her hand she might have believed she had dreamt the whole affair; but it was all too horribly real

way to Kepple street on foot, or venture to ask for a bus that went near it, there was a sudden cry from a woman who had been standing in front of her, and the

Cornish wind blew from the sea in chilly gusts.

As the solitary passenger stepped out of the thirdclass carriage and gazed round her with wide, inquiring
eyes, a man, standing by the modest bookstall, uttered
an exclamation of surprise.

"It must be she!" he muttered, "but what a lovely
girl. I wonder what the mater will think of her new
'companion.' Anyway, here goes to introduce myself."

He walked down the platform to where Rosemary was
standing heside her luggage.

next moment Rosemary caught a blurred impression of a motor van bearing down upon the woman and herself. Already weakened by her long fast and experience of the evening, she swayed and fell forward in a dead faint. When she opened her eyes again she was in a chemist's shop, and a man was holding a glass in his hand and looking at her with an interented expression. "There, you're better now," he said cheerfully. Rosemary put her hand to her head. "What has happened?" she said weakly; then, as her memory came back to her she added: "Oh, I know—the accident—it was awful!"

She leaned back and closed her eyes. Only a few minutes ago the other girl had been like herself, young and straight of limb; perhaps, unlike herself, going home to some one who loved her. The chemist's voice roused

dropped her own bag at the same time, and very likely they had been exchanged.

She went through the contents hurriedly. There was a purse with £3 in it, a handkerchief marked "F," and a letter addressed to "Miss Ffrench, Mrs. Manning's agency, Bond street, London, W."

Rosemary hesitated a moment, then opened it. It was headed: "Luck House, Barton Telford, Cornwall," and it began abruptly:

pearance of her own bag and the finding of that of the injured girl, whose surname began with the same initial as her own.

"If she has my bag," she murmured, "the police will be sure to think that she is the Rosemary Fenchester mentioned in my letters, and, if she dies, I shall be dead to every one who knew me in the past. I wonder what I ought to do—to set right the mistake, or let it go?" Then there flashed across her brain another thought like a ray of light in a dark place: Should the papers describe the affair as having happened to "Rosemary Fenchester," she need never fear the future persecution of the men who had that day trapped her into that mysterious marriage. They would forget her, and she could live her life free from the terro; of discovery.

The following morning she sent for a paper, and turned over the pages with trembling fingers. At last she found an account of the accident:

Last night, about 3 o'clock, a fatal accident occurred outside Charing Cross station. A young lady was crossing the road, when she slipped, and, as she tried to regain her footing, she was knocked down by a motor car and run over before it could be stopped. She was taken to Charing Cross Hospital, where it was found that her injuries were of such a nature that she could not live, and she died half an hour after admittance. On examining the black slik bag the police had picked up, the name on a couple of envelopes was found to be "Rosemary Fenchester," and from the contents of the letter in the bag it was obvious that she was trying to obtain a position as a governess or secretary. Five pounds were found in a small purse. The body is now waiting for identification.

As the girl put down the paper a tap at the door

with an evil. beautiful face, framed in a cloud of dusky hair. In one hand she carried a candle, and the other held the silk folds of the lace negligee she was wearing. For a moment the eyes of the two women met in a long, steady glance, then, as the figure on the landing made a sudden movement toward her. Rosemary uttered a low cry, and, opening the door, fled into the street.

In her mad, half-terrified race from capture the girl had hurried from the house without pausing to put on her jacket. In her ungloved hand, also, she still held a diamond locket that she had picked up in the empty room, and which she had been examining when the voices drew her attention. Had she not field that tiny, glittering trinket in her hand she might have believed she had

"Miss Ffrench?" he said courteous-iy, raising the soft cap on his head. 'Lady Mallaby sent me down to meet the train and drive you to Luck

As they drove along the country road something in the set of his head reminded Rosemary vaguely of some one she had met before.

"Who was it?" she wondered. As he turned and glanced at her, a light smile in his eyes, the light fell ull upon his face, and she paled with sudden strange fear, for in one ashing moment he reminded her of

one "Looking over the banisters was a woman with an evil, beautiful face."

CHAPTER III.

The voice of her companion broke in upon her troubled

"You will find Luck House very dull, I am afraid, Miss Ffrench; my mother and I are a very slow couple, She looked at him with interest. Then he was Lady

love the country." that had once been smart and white, but now was shabby and neglected, the lodge inside the gate being an ivy-covered relic of better days. As the trap wound in and out of a long drive Rosemary noticed that ground on either hand was wild and uncultivoted. When presently they emerged from the shadows of the tall nournful trees, they came in sight of a long, low-lying house of a dirty white color, portions of it hidden by a thick growth of ivy, and the windows either blocked up

by shutters or with drab-colored blinds hung across "Welcome to Luck House, Miss Ffrench," he said, "May your advent indeed bring a ray of sunshine into it. Come, my mother will be waiting to see

"Where is Lady Mallaby, Jason?" the master of the house said, turning to the old white-haired servant in "Her leddyship is in the drawing room, Sir Douglas,

he mumbled; "she is waiting tea." An elderly woman, almost as grim-faced as the old man servant, showed Rosenary to her bedroom.

There was nothing she possessed that bore her real name on it, but still a feeling of regret seized her that she had not written frankly to Lady Mallaby, explaining the accident that had occurred to her first 'companion

The sound of a distant gong brought her mind back to the fact that she had yet to meet Lady Mailaby, and with a sensation of nervousness she left the room and went downstairs. In the hall she saw Sir Douglas, and he made no pretense of not waiting for her. He came forward with a smfle. "My mother is in the drawing room, Miss Ffrench."

Rosemary followed him silently, and found herself in a room so large and sparse of furniture that at first she

armchair by the side of the fire. "Bo you are Miss Ffrench," said a cold, harsh voice, and then Rosemary saw a thin, gaunt woman, with a haggard, wasted face beneath a pompadour of white hair. The face still bore traces of remarkable beauty in the lines of the perfect profile; yet what impressed the girl most was the almost wild expression in the vivid blue eyes. She felt that they were devouring her eagerly, hungrily, and she found herself unable to say a word in the presence of this strange old woman who was the

"Well," snapped the rasping voice again, "are you tongue-tied, girl, that you can't speak? A strange sort of companion you are!"

Rosemary flushed hotly. She knew that she was making herself foolish by this sudden shyness, and she forced herself to say something. "I am sorry," she stammered. "I-I did not mean to be stupid, Lady Mallaby."

"Can't help it, I suppose!" was the tart retort. "All you girls are the same; you think it is a bother to talk to an old woman, but you can find your tongues when-"Mother!" Sir Douglas said suddenly, "you seem to have forgotten that Miss Ffrench has had a long, cold journey, and that she is our guest. She naturally feels a little shy and awkward."

'Quite so, Douglas," came the unexpected mild reply.

won't find any young men here you can play with. Now you may go to your room. I will send for you if i

Rosemary slipped away and flew up the wide oak stair-case with light, springing feet. When she reached her own room she sat down in a chair to think. Suppose Lady Mallaby found out the deception she had practiced upon her, what would happen? Would she send her to prison, or would Sir Douglas intercede for her and let

I like him," she murmuerd, "but I'm afraid of that dreadful old woman. Her eyes frighten me. Oh, I do hope I shall be able to hide myself here from danger of discovery," she went on feverishly, pacing the floor of her bedroom with restless feet. "It all seemed so simple her bedroom with restless feet. "It all seemed so simple at first to take another girls name—a dead girl's—and live under it. But I quite forgot that the real Miss Ffrench may have had relations and have given her address to them. I wonder what she was like," she mused. "I had such a hazy glimpse of her before she was knocked down, At any rate, she could not have sent Lady Mallaby any photograph, or she would have known at once that I was not the girl she had engaged as her companion."

Then a gleam of relief shot across her mind. "And Miss Ffrench could not have had time to give this address to her friends, for Lady Mallaby's letter was dated the day before, and she could only have received it that same morning. Oh, I do hope that I shall be able to stay," she murmured again; "in spite of Lady Mallaby being so strange in her manner and of the isolation and gloominess of everything. I feel that I good her heaven here. everything, I feel that I could be almost happy

iness of everything, I feel that I could be almost happy at Luck House."

She arose and continued her unpacking, arranging her girlish odds and ends about the quaint looking room, and it was quite dark when she had finished. A knock at the door heralded the entrance of the grim-looking servant, who brought in a lamp, and then said brusquely:

"Lady Mallaby is retiring early to bed, and Sir Douglas is going out, and your dinner will be sent up here to you unless you'd like to come down to the dining room."

"Oh, no: I prefer to have it up here, thank you," Rosemary replied quickly. Then she added in a friendly tone: "What is your name, please, so that I shall know what to call you?"

what is your name, please, so that I shall know what to call you?"

"My name's Keziah," was the ungracious answer, "but you've no call to think of that. You'll not be here long enough to want much from me, or any one."

"What do you mean?" Rosemary said haughtily.

"That I've been 'ere at Luck 'Ouse come forty years, and ever since she's taken to 'aving companions they've come and gone regular in 'twos' once a month. Some won't stay a week out—and others she kicks out—and you're the first that's asked me my name."

Rosemary smiled, though she was feeling far from cheerful.

Rosemary smiled, though she was feeling far from cheerful.

"Then, let us take that as a good omen, Keziah," she said gently. "I certainly won't go yet, and I hope Lady Mallaby won't 'kick' me out."

But when her dinner that Keziah brought up later had been cleared away, and she was alone for the night, Rosemary's spirits began to flicker until they went out altogether, and the rain and wind that beat against the windows outside did not tend to raise her spirits. She put on her coat, as it was cold and she had no fire, and tried to read a book she had bought at the station that morning. But gradually her eyes began to close, the book fell from her hand, and she dropped into a light sleep. When she opened her eyes the lamp was going out and the gale had increased to a fury, shaking the windows as though bent on breaking them.

Suddenly Rosemary caught her breath. Above the noise of the gale she heard a cry—a long-drawn-out moan that chilled the blood in her young veins. She opened the door and listened. Down below, on the first long corridor, she heard noises as of some one carrying or dragging a heavy weight, and then again there broke on the stillness that haunting cry of mingled rage and grief, and Rosemary thought she heard a voice say:

"For mercy's sake, be quiet—remember that lonely girl upstairs."

Then the sound of the dragging and struggling came

Then the sound of the dragging and struggling came Then the sound of the dragging and strugging and nearer, and in a panic of fear she shut her door and turned the key.

What had happened? What mystery was it that brooded like a bird of prey over Luck House?

(TO BE CONTINUED TO-MORROW.)